

CORPORATION OF WASHINGTON.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COMMON COUNCIL,

OF THE

CITY OF WASHINGTON.

JANUARY 7, 1828.

Referred to the Committee on Commerce.

WASHINGTON :

PRINTED BY GALES & SEATON.

1828.

MEMORIAL

In the presence of the ... and ... of the ...

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MEMORIAL.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the
United States :*

The memorial of the Mayor, Board of Aldermen, and Board of Common Council, of the city of Washington, in behalf of the citizens thereof,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH :

That your memorialists, fully sensible of the important benefits and advantages incident to commercial trade, have long viewed, with much solicitude, the almost total absence of both, as regards the city of Washington ; consequent, as your memorialists beg leave respectfully to represent, to the bad condition of the channels of the rivers adjoining thereto.

That this evil, the longer it continues, will the more effectually retard the advancement of the more *substantial* interests of the city, your memorialists deem it unnecessary to demonstrate to your honorable and enlightened body ; but they beg leave to lay before you, as the only legislative power to whom they can apply, their petition for aid in this important particular, so identified, as it must necessarily be, with the growth and prosperity of the metropolis of the Union.

Your memorialists, aware of the authority given them by Congress, in the charter of the city, to “preserve” the navigation of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers adjoining the same, and unwilling to trouble your honorable body with applications on the subject, at least without an effort, on their part, to effect that which their limited means scarcely afforded a hope of accomplishing, proceeded to appropriate and expend money on the channel of the Anacostia river, leading to the Navy Yard of the United States, and in making a survey of the channel of the Potomac adjoining the city ; a copy of the chart whereof is deposited in the office of the Mayor, and will be submitted for your inspection, if desired.

The amount of expenditures thus made by your memorialists, including a balance at the disposal of Commissioners, appointed for the purpose, exceeds two thousand dollars ; that is to say :

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| For improving the Anacostia in its navigation from the Potomac to the United States’ Navy Yard, and for like improvement of the Potomac channel, adjoining the city, | \$ 2,000 |
| For causing a survey to be made of both channels | - 450 |

\$ 2,450

A sum which, though comparatively small, the depressed state of the

finances of the city, rendered so by adverse circumstances, not necessary here to relate, can scarcely provide for, without impairing, in a very considerable degree, its resources for current and indispensable demands.

The provision here referred to, however, while it proves that your memorialists have not been wanting in exertions, on their part, to promote the commercial interests of their city, and to improve that particular means of access to it, at the head of which is situated the Navy Yard of the United States, must fall short of effecting the object contemplated ; and your memorialists, as a dernier resort, but reposing with confidence in the good wishes of Congress toward the District of Columbia, respectfully solicit the attention of your honorable body to this great and important branch of its best interests.

Your memorialists are the more encouraged to the adoption of this course, because of the known liberality displayed, on various occasions, by the National Legislature, in providing means for advancing the commercial interests of different parts of the Union, by the improvement of navigable rivers and harbors.

Almost every State and Territory has, at one period or another, at certain points within its limits, felt the salutary effects of this liberal policy of the General Government.

In May, 1824, an act to improve the navigation of the Ohio and Mississippi, appropriated 75,000 dollars for that important object, and for the procurement of the requisite water craft, machinery, implements, and force. At the same session, Congress appropriated 20,000 dollars for making or deepening the channel leading into the harbor of Presque Isle, in Pennsylvania ; and the same sum to repair Plymouth Beach, in Massachusetts, and thereby prevent the harbor from being destroyed. At a later period, May, 1826, an act was also passed "*for improving certain harbors, and the navigation of certain rivers, and for authorizing surveys to be made of certain bays, sounds, and rivers, therein mentioned ;*" by which act upwards of 85,000 dollars was distributed from the Treasury of the United States to the States of Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Delaware, Ohio, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Alabama, and the Territory of Michigan, for the improvement of harbors, the preservation of navigation, clearing out and deepening rivers, and for surveys of certain channels, within the same. Still later, at the last Session of Congress, a further sum of 30,000 dollars was appropriated for the improvement of the steamboat navigation, &c., of the Ohio.

May not, then, the citizens of Washington, an important portion of the District of Columbia, exclusively under the government and control of Congress, and upon whom they are dependent for their present welfare and future prosperity ; may not they, who, with no voice in the National Councils, can have no agency in administering to the wants or wishes of their fellow-countrymen ; may not these, however, with propriety, appeal to the authority which the Constitution has placed over them, for a participation in some of the *permanently* beneficial measures of the General Government ? Surely that authority, while

extending to other sections of the Union the solid and salutary fruits that grow out of it, will not disregard an application of this sort from that section which the Constitution has made its own peculiar charge.

Your memorialists, therefore, pray your honorable body to take into your consideration a measure connected with the permanent welfare of the city which is the abode of the General Government; namely, the means of rendering its waters navigable for individual commercial enterprise, and for the uses and original intention of Government, in relation to the establishment, at this place, of a Navy Yard. The propriety of re-imbursing to the Corporation the moneys they have actually expended for that object, is also most respectfully submitted. By so doing, and making provision by law accordingly, the prosperity of the city will be ensured, and the convenience and facilities of the United States with their Navy Yard be essentially promoted. And your memorialists will ever pray, &c.

JO. GALES, Jr. *Mayor.*

PETER FORCE,

GEO. WATTERSTON,

EDWARD S. LEWIS,

Committee on the part of the Board of Aldermen.

JAMES H. HANDY,

JAMES LARNED,

ADAM LINDSAY,

Committee on the part of the Board of Common Council.

WASHINGTON, January, 1828.

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